

VZCZCXRO7128
OO RUEHGA RUEHHA RUEHMT RUEHQU RUEHVC
DE RUEHON #0151/01 1881350
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 071350Z JUL 09 ZDK
FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2870
INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0064
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0065
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0007
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC
RUEPINS/HQ BICE INTEL WASHINGTON DC
RUEADRO/HQ ICE DRO WASHINGTON DC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USNORTHCOM PETERSON AFB CO
RUEILB/NCTC WASHDC
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TORONTO 000151

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: De-Radicalization Program Beginning in Toronto

Ref: (A) 08 Toronto 286 (B) Toronto 106

TORONTO 00000151 001.3 OF 002

Sensitive But Unclassified -- protect accordingly.

¶1. (U) Summary: Mohammed Robert Heft, a Canadian Muslim convert, is using Paradise Forever (P4E), a community center that provides assistance and social services to new Muslim converts in Toronto, to counter the effects of radicalization among young Muslims. Heft plans to help de-radicalize wayward Muslim youths through P4E's newly established "detox" program and hopes to see some of the members of the Toronto 18 participate in the program. According to Heft, P4E enjoys the support of a number of national and international organizations, Canadian intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and local politicians. Heft told PolOff that he will take a delegation of Canadian MPs to Dubai in August to meet with leaders of donor organization Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charity and Humanitarian establishment (MBRAMCH). He has invited officers from ConGen Toronto and ConGen Dubai to join. End Summary.

THE PARADISE FOREVER ORGANIZATION

¶2. (U) Mohammed Robert Heft founded Paradise Forever (P4E) as a Canadian non-profit organization in 2004. The organization, headquartered in the North York area of Toronto, provides support to newly-converted Muslims and includes a community support center with temporary residences and other social services. The center's clients are mostly from Pakistani and Indian families. Heft says that P4E plans to open a similar center in Chicago, Illinois.

¶3. (U) According to Heft, he founded P4E to counter what he calls "do-it-yourself-Islam." He hopes that by facilitating education for new Muslim converts, who often turn to sources like the internet for self-study of Islam, he can help protect new Muslims from manipulation by extremist groups misrepresenting the teachings of the Quran. Heft explains that when he converted to Islam in his 20s, he also explored the faith without assistance and understands the dangers for new converts.

¶4. (U) During a June 10 meeting, Heft presented PolOff with a number of letters from regional and national religious organizations that ranged from perfunctory introductions of P4E to fulsome support. These organizations include the Muslim Association of Canada, the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, and the Islamic Society of North

America. A letter from Liberal MP Derek Lee, who has supported the organization's charitable work, was the most effusive, describing the organization's mission and efforts. (Note: P4E was first located in Lee's riding of Scarborough-Rouge River (just east of Toronto) before relocating to North York in 2008.) Heft also claims to have a good working relationship with Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). (Note: At the start of the meeting, Heft told PolOff that he had spoken to CSIS earlier about the meeting with Consulate Staff and that CSIS told him he did not need to meet with us if he did not want to.) The organization, receives a large portion of its funding from the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charity and Humanitarian establishment (MBRAMCH), based in Dubai, UAE.

DE-RADICALIZATION THROUGH "DETOX"

15. (U) According to Heft, in the wake of the Toronto 18 arrests, Mohammed Shahid Shaikh, the director of Masjid El Noor in Toronto and the father of a key government witness, approached Heft about starting a de-radicalization program. Shaikh reportedly thought of P4E since the organization already had the facilities and the past experience helping Muslim young adults.

16. (U) The "12-step Detox" program at P4E is six to twelve months in length, with participants residing at P4E's center and receiving education about Islam as well as attending counseling sessions with a Muslim psychologist. Sayyid Ahmed Amiruddin, a young local religious leader who was recently featured on Fox News for his de-radicalization work, will lead religious classes at the center. Amiruddin, who attended the June 10 meeting, told PolOff that his work focuses on troubled Muslim youth. As chairman of the Al Sunnah Foundation of Canada (ASFC), an organization with the stated goal of

TORONTO 00000151 002.3 OF 002

preserving the moderate message of traditional Sunni Islam, Amiruddin has met with Members of Parliament and spoken at the Canada 2020 conference - a forum of leading Canadian thinkers.

HELP FOR THE TORONTO 18

17. (SBU) Heft hopes to have members of the Toronto 18 terrorist group who are convicted attend the "detox" program upon completion of any sentence. He says that he communicates with six of the Toronto 18, including the first of the group members to be sentenced this past May but released for time served, and another who recently pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing (ref B). According to Heft, a recently-released Toronto 18 member has agreed to attend some sessions at the P4E center, in addition to sessions with a GoC-recommended Muslim cleric. (Note: Heft told PolOff that he met the recently-released convicted member in 2005, one year before the Toronto 18 were arrested. The young man had been brought to the P4E center because he was suffering abuse at his Hindu home after converting to Islam. He left the center after a few weeks. Heft says he did not hear from him again until after the arrests, when the young man's lawyer contacted him.)

18. (SBU) Four other members of the group have also expressed interest in participating in P4E's program, according to Heft. He suspects that some of the group members awaiting trial may be interested in participating in the program as a way of gaining leniency from the judge, but he says what is important is getting them into the program. (Note: Although the four Toronto 18 members have not confirmed their participation in P4E's "detox" program, the lack of certainty does not seem to be hampering Heft's plans. On P4E's website, there is currently a request for donations for renovations to provide additional living space for the members of the Toronto 18.)

19. (SBU) Comment: P4E seems to have garnered the support of local Muslim leaders, as well as area politicians. Heft says he is eager to also earn the support of the USG, inviting PolOff (or another representative of the USG) to attend meetings with MBRAMCH in Dubai

in August, to which he will also bring Canadian MP Derek Lee and other as-yet-unconfirmed MPs. (Note: ConGen Toronto has no plans to attend the meeting.) Heft and his colleague, Amiruddin, also invited ConGen Toronto to participate in a Muslim day event to be held at a local theme park. Whether or not Heft is ultimately able to include members of the Toronto 18 in his program, it is apparent that he will conduct the "detox" program for other young Muslims. As we learn more about Heft and his organization, we may find that he proves to be a useful contact through which we can gain insight into the Muslim community in Toronto, as well as conduct outreach.

BYSFIELD